

CREATING LEARNING SCENARIOS

CREATING LEARNING SCENARIOS

A planning guide for adult educators

Ed Errington

©2005 Ed Errington

First published in 2005

CoolBooks
Palmerston North
New Zealand
coolbooks@inspire.net.nz

ISBN 0-476-01559-6

Printed by Keeling and Munday Limited
PO Box 61
Palmerston North
New Zealand

**This book can be supplied in the UK or worldwide if
ordered by email on: coolbooks@inspire.net.nz**

Copyright. No part of this book may be reproduced without written permission
except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical articles and reviews.

Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	1
INTRODUCTION	9
ABOUT THIS GUIDE	10
A RATIONALE FOR SCENARIO-BASED LEARNING	11
What is a learning scenario?	12
What is scenario-based learning (SBL)?	12
Dramatic qualities of scenarios	13
Why some educators use SBL	14
Features of successful scenarios	16
FOUR MAIN SCENARIO OPTIONS	17
Skills-based scenarios	18
Problem-based scenarios	21
Issues-based scenarios	23
Speculative-based scenarios	25
PLANNING SCENARIO LEARNING	31
Planning scenario learning in twelve steps	32
Decide what you want students to learn	33
Decide whether a scenario approach is appropriate	34
Peruse content area and decide where scenario fits	35

Choose a scenario option to meet learning intentions	37
Decide who will write the scenario	38
Draft a clear scenario descriptor	40
Decide how students will engage in the scenario	43
Identify clear participatory roles	45
Decide on tasks and target questions	46
Decide how students will report back	48
Decide how learning will be monitored	49
Gather appropriate resources	50
A checklist for scenario planning	50
DELIVERING SCENARIO LEARNING	53
Delivery steps	54
Preparing students for scenario learning	55
Introducing the scenario	56
Outlining how the process will operate	57
Communicating the educator's role	58
Modifying the scenario	59
EVALUATING & REFLECTING ON SCENARIOS	61
TROUBLESHOOTING/OPTIMISING SUCCESS	63
REFERENCES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY	69
MATERIALS TO SUPPORT SCENARIOS	75

Acknowledgements

I wish to thank colleagues and friends who allowed me to work with their staff: In the UK: Professor Fred Lockwood and Professor Gail Heathcote, Manchester Metropolitan University; David Wood, formerly Central School of Speech and Drama, London; Professor Derek Colquhoun, Hull University; Richard Clark and Tristram Hooley, Leicester University; Caroline Stainton, Nottingham Trent University; Richard Latimer, University of Huddersfield; Gill Clark, University of Bristol; Jo Trelfa and Kevin Feaviour, College of St Mark & St John, Plymouth; Dr Kristine Mason O'Connor, University of Gloucestershire; and, Jane Clarke of De Montfort University, Leicester.

In Spain, Dr Carmina Pascual, University of Valencia. In Chile, Sra. Maria de Luz Hurtado, Universidad de Santiago de Chile. In Canada, Professor Larry O'Farrell, Queens University, Kingston, Ontario. In the USA: Dr Barb Millis, University of Nevada at Reno; and, Paul Kuerbis, Colorado College, Colorado Springs.

In Australia: Dr Erika Martens, La Trobe University; Mary-Rose McLaren, Alistair Inglis & Roger Gabb, Victoria University. In New Zealand: Louise Bevan, Eastern Institute of Technology; Maxine Alterio and Dr Linda Robertson, Otago Polytechnic; Gordon Suddaby, Massey University; Dr Tony Harland, University of Otago; and Hazel Shuttleworth, Air New Zealand Training Centre, Auckland. In Singapore: Dr Daphne Pan at the National University of Singapore.

My special thanks go to Professor Tony Ghaye and his superb team at the Institute of Reflective Practice, Gloucester, UK, for their outstanding support, encouragement and promotion of scenario-based learning.

Final thanks go to my wife Rowena, whose untiring love, unselfish support, endless faith, and resilience have helped me achieve so much.



INTRODUCTION

"Nothing is so powerful as an idea whose time has come" -Victor Hugo

The notion of using scenarios for learning purposes is a "powerful" one, but hardly new. The Ancient Greeks used scenarios to reinforce and explore their ethical and moral positioning in society some thousands of years ago. Today, many tertiary educators are coming to appreciate the tremendous potential of scenario-based learning for harnessing students' natural scenario-planning tendencies in order to explore theoretical and practical knowledge.

There are four main kinds of scenarios: The first is a skills-based scenario; this is used to deliver fundamental knowledge. Here opportunities are given for students to demonstrate acquired skills, abilities, attitudes and basic understandings of complex procedures. The second is a problem-based scenario - created to help students integrate their theoretical understandings with practical knowledge in demanding ways. Decision-making and critical analysis are incorporated into the problem-based scenario process.

Issues-based scenarios provide a third option: These are used to explore concerns that underpin or influence an area of study/practice. Students have the opportunity to take a stand on an issue, and importantly understand more clearly the impact of human interests on (professional) decision-making. Finally, speculative-based scenarios allow students to contemplate a range of past, present, and future factors that influence their work.

Together these four main options incorporate the majority of scenario offerings in tertiary education. This guide focuses on how scenarios can be created to meet specific teaching and learning intentions. Interested? Then read on...



About this Guide

This guide is intended for educators from all subject, discipline, and workplace/vocational areas of adult education. It has been written to help educators plan, deliver, evaluate and reflect on the uses of scenarios for learning and teaching purposes.

The guide begins with a rationale for using 'scenario-based learning' - why educators employ it, some motivational qualities of scenarios (through their closeness to film and television), and a note on what constitutes 'successful scenarios.' This is followed by an in-depth look at four main scenario options, and how these can be used to achieve particular learning intentions.

The guide then focuses on a systematic approach to the planning of learning scenarios including the conditions necessary to optimize success. From here, attention is given to the actual delivery of scenarios and selected moments for evaluation, and reflection.

It is hoped that you, the reader will be enthused by the notion of scenario-based learning, and placing scenarios at the heart of the learning experience. They provide an ideal platform for students to experience deep level learning tasks, and attain high order cognitive skills (decision-making and critical analysis).

Above all, I hope you will enjoy creating your own scenarios and putting these well tested ideas into practice with your own students.